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NEW SPIRITAN UNIVERSITIES: THE SPIRITAN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, EJISU, GHANA



Anthony Anomah, C.S.Sp.

Anthony Anomah, C.S.Sp. of the Spiritan Province of Ghana is, since November 2013, the Rector of the Spiritan University College, Ejisu, Ghana (SUC). He studied Philosophy at the Spiritan School of Philosophy, Isieniu, Nigeria and Theology at the Spiritan International School of Theology (SIST) in Nigeria and was ordained priest in Ghana on 1st July 1997. After studies at Duquesne University (BA Philosophy, 1992, MA Psychology, 1998, MA Theology, 1998, with dissertation: "The Role of the Laity in the Church: a Case Study in the Diocese of Kumasi, Ghana"), he served as a part-time lecturer at SUC from 1999-2004. Since January 2005 he has been full time lecturer and formator at the College. He has also served as Bursar and Dean.

Short History

Established in 1990, the Spiritan University College, Ejisu [SUC] will celebrate its Silver Jubilee in December 2015.

SUC is situated on a 75-acre piece of land at Ejisu in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, West Africa. It is ten kilometers to Kumasi. It was opened on 17th December 1990, the foundation stone being laid by Very Rev. Fr. Pierre Haas, C.S.Sp (then Superior General) and blessed by the Most Rev. Peter Kwasi Sarpong, Bishop of Kumasi (now Archbishop Emeritus I of the Archdiocese of Kumasi). It began as a first cycle house of formation of the West African Foundation to prepare candidates for religious missionary life in the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, the graduates in the first three years were all religious seminarians. The current proprietors are the Union of Spiritan Circumscriptions of West Africa (UCWA).

In 1997, the two year program in philosophy was extended to three years. In 2002, the proprietors decided to raise the academic standard to enable graduates to meet the intellectual challenges of society today. Moreover, they felt the need to bring the benefits of a Catholic and Spiritan education to the youth of Ghana and Africa as a whole by opening the doors of the College to the wider public, male and female, and of any religious persuasion.

The College was accredited by the National Accreditation Board on 25th September, 2005 and affiliated to the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) on 15th May, 2008 to offer a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy and the Social Sciences. On 20th June 2008, the University College status was inaugurated. Since then the College has added the following programs: BA in Sociology and Economics, Diploma in Philosophy and Religious Studies, B.Sc. in Business Administration (with options in Accounting, Human Resource Management, Banking and Finance, Marketing, Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management), B.Sc. in Finance and Management, and B.Sc. in Economics and Finance.

Currently, four religious Institutes participate in the academic life of the College. They are the Congregation of St. Joseph (Josephites), the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers), the Congregation of the Divine Redeemer (Redemptorists), and the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritans). The Spiritan

community is made up of students from Benin, Togo, Ghana, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, and Nigeria North East. The Konongo Mampong Diocese in which the College is situated and other Dioceses in Ghana also send students from time to time. In addition, other students come from Guinea Bissau, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Rwanda, etc.

...strive for academic excellence in research and teaching in Africa, through a comprehensive Catholic and particularly Spiritan formation.

It has a preferential option for the poor and marginalized in our society.

Vision Statement, Charism, and Mission

The vision of the College is to strive for academic excellence in research and teaching in Africa, through a comprehensive Catholic and particularly Spiritan formation. SUC is devoted to helping students seek practical wisdom and truth and to develop a harmonious relationship between faith and reason. It aims to do this through a comprehensive, qualitative, liberal, professional, Catholic, and Spiritan education in a serene and conducive environment. It has a preferential option for the poor and marginalized in our society.

The Progress so Far

The prevailing circumstances of our time, such as the high demand for tertiary education in Ghana and issues of public funding, have been important triggers of changes in educational policy. Ghana's private sector is the driving force of our College. It plays a vital role in complementing the effort of government in the provision of qualitative higher education, education that is responsive to the changing developmental needs of the nation. SUC has seen significant transformation in its own operational focus over the years, without abandoning the philosophy and vision of its founding fathers. From the initial unaccredited two year program in philosophy and religious studies, the College now boasts of degree programs in Philosophy and Social Sciences, Business Administration, Sociology and Economics, all accredited by the National Accreditation Board and affiliated to KNUST. In June 2015, the College started a Master's degree program in theology affiliated to Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, USA. An agreement was signed with Duquesne University in order to strengthen the ties between the two sister institutions and to enable their students to receive certain educational benefits from one another.

Partnership with Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, USA

The President of Duquesne University, Dr. Charles J. Dougherty, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the College during his visit to SUC in October 2011. As a follow up, the Rector and the President of the Governing Council visited Duquesne University, USA in September 2013. Dr. George

Anthony Anomah, C.S.Sp. Worgul, Duquesne University Coordinator for the African Program, visited the College in December 2013. During his visit, he discussed the affiliation process of the Summer Master's degree in Theology with the National Accreditation Board. Dr. Worgul visited the College again in September 2014 and paid a visit to St. Gregory Provincial Major Seminary, Kumasi and St. Peter's Regional Seminary, Pedu-Cape Coast. We hope that the two seminaries will benefit from the affiliation with Duquesne University.

Also, Dr. Alan Miciak, former Dean of the Business School of Duquesne University, visited the College in January 2013 and held meetings with the students and faculty of the School of Business, and with KNUST Moderator of Business School and administrators. A number of issues of mutual benefit were discussed, including faculty exchange, staff development, faculty mentorship, and the hosting of SUC faculty in Duquesne University to Duquesne practices.

Partnership with San Francisco Theological Seminary, Californai, U.S.A.

From 8th June to 18th July 2015, three faculty members from San Francisco Theological Seminary and two candidates will join five other candidates at SUC for a six-week Clinical Pastoral Education program here at Ejisu. It is hoped that in future candidates from SUC would also visit San Francisco Theological Seminary for similar exchange programs.

Student Population

The table below shows the total student population of the College for the 2014/15 academic year.

	Level 400			Level 300			Level 200			Level 100		
	M*	F*	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Business	45	12	57	23	12	35	42	22	64	40	25	56
Sociology	4	1	5	3	2	5	3	2	5	4	1	5
Economics												
Philosophy	25	0	25	30	0	30	40	8	48	25	1	26
TOTAL	74	13	87	56	14	70	85	32	117	33	15	87

* M = Male; F = female

The College has a staunch Catholic and Spiritan identity and is immersed in Catholic traditions and morals that promote human development.

The first female student entered our campus in February 2010.

The total number of 361 includes 74 female students. The College has a staunch Catholic and Spiritan identity and is immersed in Catholic traditions and morals that promote human development. The environment for academic work is impeccable. The College has the minimum level of infrastructure to sustain ongoing academic and physical expansion and increases in the student population. It has quality staff for teaching, research, administration, and management.

Graduate Output

The first batch of students in the BA Philosophy and Social Sciences programs graduated on 19th June 2010, with degrees and Diplomas from KNUST, while the first batch of students in the BA in Sociology and Economics program graduated on 19th June 2013, including the first female student who graduated with a combined degree in Sociology and Economics. Until this time, all the graduates had being seminarians.

The first female student entered our campus in February 2010. Her commitment and resilience in pursuit of academic excellence has drawn more female students to the College. There are 74 female students in the current academic year. They enjoy the serene atmosphere conducive to personal growth and academic excellence offered by the Catholic and Spiritan education. In all, about 150 students have graduated with degrees and Diplomas in Philosophy and Social Sciences and Sociology and Economics. The first batch of students in the Business School will graduate this academic year.

Hopes and Aspirations

SUC has the desire to increase the number and quality of the physical infrastructure of the university. It has the following goals for the near future.

- i. develop a mainstream use of Information and Communication Technology in teaching, learning, and administration of the university;
- ii. attract, develop, and retain high quality human resources, a necessity for achieving the vision of the University;
- iii. increase Internally Generated Funds (IGF) of the University by increasing enrolment from 350 to 2,000 by the year 2020.

A strategic plan is underway to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in order to strategize in a very keen and competitive area in our nation's development.

Anthony Anomah, C.S.Sp. We intend to offer courses in Education, Information and Communication Technology and Allied Sciences.

The College has plans to increase the number of permanent faculty from 15 to 50.

Means towards Realizing our Aspirations

The College has plans to increase the number of permanent faculty from 15 to 50. It pursues strategies to attract, develop, and retain competent teaching, professional and administrative staff and to attract capable, active, and productive academics who have retired from active public service. Like every tertiary institution, it has instituted systems for promotion, career progress and reward for excellence. It has set out to identify, mentor, and cause to grow a high calibre of students with the potential of becoming members of faculty. It is institutionalising performance assessment systems for teaching, professional, and administrative staff.

The Congregation of the Holy Spirit, Province of Ghana, in collaboration with other stakeholders, has earmarked some candidates for further studies in Kenya, Italy, USA, France and Portugal with a view to strengthening the existing staff in the College. Secondly, we intend to mount new and demand-driven academic and professional programs. We are in the course of introducing additional evening and weekend programs that target specific professionals. There will be short and refresher courses tailor-made to help workers in the public and private sector upgrade their skills. We are doing everything possible to improve the quantity and quality of research conducted by faculty and staff of the university.

...courses tailor-made to help workers in the public and private sector upgrade their skills.

We need to construct additional lecture rooms and offices for students, faculty and staff. Steps are being taken to strengthen collaboration between the University and industry, increase private sector involvement in the development of residential facilities for junior and senior members, and expand other supporting infrastructure, utilities and services to create a congenial environment for teaching, learning, and research.

In recognition of the distinguished service of the late Rev. Fr. Francis Ato Jackson-Donkoh, Rector of the SUC, and in furtherance of his ardent desire to promote the education of female students at the College, and also in recognition of the selfless service rendered to the College by the late Rev. Fr. Ernest Ayitsey Akorsou, the Spiritan Provincial Council, in collaboration with the Chancellor, the Bishop of Konongo-Mampong Diocese, and the Governing Council of the College at its meeting of 10th January 2013 set up the Jackson-Donkoh and Ayitsey Akorsou Endowment Fund in memory of Rev. Frs. Francis Ato Jackson-Donkoh and Ayitsey Akorsou. The parish of St. Thomas More

Church, Bexleyheath, Kent., UK and friends of the late Frs. Francis Jackson-Donkoh and Ernest Ayitsey Akorsou have helped to establish this fund. We appeal to all people of good will to support this noble cause.

...70% of our income comes from tuition fees.

...lack of residential facilities for faculty members and staff and lack of accommodation for general students hamper the growth, development, teaching and research capacities of the College.

Challenges

As a private College without government funding, about 70% of our income comes from tuition fees. The current low financial resources, low revenue sources, and low capacity for revenue mobilisation are some of the biggest challenges facing the College. The low level of income also makes it difficult for the College to employ permanent staff for teaching and administration.

We currently lack adequate administrative infrastructure (offices) for effective administrative work. Apart from the full time lecturers, part time lecturers do not have office accommodation and this makes it difficult for them to meet with students after lectures. In addition, lack of residential facilities for faculty members and staff and lack of accommodation for general students hamper the growth, development, teaching and research capacities of the College. We are in dialogue with stakeholders and private entrepreneurs to develop and put up accommodation for students who come from far and near. A number of students have expressed interest in studying at the College, but have gone away because of lack of hostel facilities.

Since 2010, Government has opened three public universities in Ho, Sunyani, and Koforidua; it intends to convert all 10 Polytechnics in Ghana into Technical Universities, with the mandate to offer their own degrees and without the usual mentorship of an established university required for private universities. This poses a challenge to the growth and expansion of SUC and other private universities in Ghana. Secondly, with the emergence of both public and well-funded private universities, some private universities are finding it difficult to attract and retain experienced staff because they cannot afford to pay them as much as the public universities funded by government.

The number of private tertiary institutions in Ghana has increased considerably in the last few years, with the majority of them in Accra, Tema, Kumasi, Sunyani, etc. This has created the situation where teaching and non-teaching staff are moving from one place to the other for greener pastures. With the limited resources at our disposal, we are sometimes unable to compete with the other private universities supported by Churches such as the Methodist, Presbyterian, Anglican, International Central Gospel Church, and the Catholic Church of Ghana.

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The costs of affiliation and accreditation charges for the various programs are also increasing astronomically due to the inflationary rate of the cedi to the dollar. At the moment, it costs twelve thousand Ghana Cedis (about 3,500 dollars) to have a program accredited for three to five years renewable. This high cost of running a private tertiary institution without the support of government or Church is challenging. Apart from a library grant from the General Council of the Congregation, the College depends entirely on tuition fees paid by the students, most of whom are find it difficult to pay regularly.

*...the College will
celebrate its Silver
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2015.*

Producing Scholars of the Future

As mentioned at the beginning, the College will celebrate its Silver Jubilee in December 2015. It has produced great scholars and missionaries who serve in all corners of the globe as priests, Brothers, lecturers and civil servants, with some already serving as staff members of the College. Others are pursuing graduate studies in Philosophy, Theology, Scripture, Sociology and Economics in Africa, Europe and America with a view to returning to make their contribution to the development of the College and their respective nations.

*Anthony Anomah, C.S.Sp.
Spiritans University College, Ejisu*